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## PECULIARITIES OF TRANSLATING CHILDREN'S LITERATURE

*The article focuses on the analysis of children's literature translation. The definition of children's literature is researched in the article, taking into account its purpose, audience and content, which makes it an interesting subject for studying. The function of the translated text in the target culture may also differ from the one intended by the author. The current study will take into account all of the mentioned factors (purpose, audience and content), taking a functionalist approach to the analysis. While translating children's literature, the translator is not only the mediator between two systems of language and culture, but he also becomes the second writer of the work. Not only he is to transfer the meaning of the ST (source text) message, but also make it comprehensible for the target audience, which, thus, makes him bear in mind all the features of children's book. In the article the special attention is paid to the techniques of translating and its specific issues. The main approaches of translating for children and the features of children's literature have been also researched.*

**Key words:** ST (source text), TT (target text).

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## ОСОБЛИВОСТІ ПЕРЕКЛАДУ ДИТЯЧОЇ ЛІТЕРАТУРИ

*Стаття присвячена аналізу перекладу дитячої літератури. У статті досліджується визначення дитячої літератури з урахуванням її мети, аудиторії та змісту, що робить її цікавою для вивчення. Перекладаючи дитячу літературу, перекладач є не лише посередником між двома системами: мови та культури, він стає другим автором твору. Автор повинен не лише передати значення повідомлення, але й зробити його зрозумілим для цільової аудиторії, що, таким чином, змушує його пам'ятати про всі особливості дитячої літератури. У статті особлива увага приділяється техніці перекладу. Досліджено також основні підходи перекладу для дітей та особливості дитячої літератури.*

**Ключові слова:** вихідний текст, цільовий текст.

Children's literature is an integral part of literature as a whole, and still many scholars have different points of view as concerning its definition. The notion of children's literature requires a lot of research to be conducted in order to define it comprehensively, having taken into account its main functions, features and audience. Everyone knows that such literary genres as legend, fairy tale, fable, adventure stories, nursery rhymes, and many others belong to those, which are widely enjoyed by children.

Convention on the Rights of the Child underlines that any person under 18 years old is considered to be a child, which allows to cover a wide range of literary works designated specifically for this audience. Children's literature is divided into several groups: under 3 years old; 4-7 years old; 8-15 years old; and 16-18 years old. As O. Rebriv mentions, the reason for such division is "quantitative and qualitative difference between various levels of mental processing of speech (defined on the basis of such mental operations as comparison, classification, analysis, synthesis, abstraction, generalization, concretization, assessment, etc), and, therefore, of linguistic content of certain literary works" [6]. The older is the child, the more linguistically complex the book may be. It also means that children's literature comprises maximally wide range of genres – starting from ABCs and finishing with dystopias for the young.

Basing on the functional outline presented by Katharina Reiss, quite a few of them may be applied to the analysis of translating for children. Firstly, while defining the notion of children's literature, understanding the inner world of the child, his/her linguistic and pragmatic competence is essential. Informative features of children's literature comprise the following:

1) the text is conditioned by what a reader already knows (the author has to be careful about choosing topics of his/her book, scenery of the plot, sentence structures, words, state the topic directly without extra implications);

2) books of children's literature appeal to imagination of their reader and, thus, are to be differentiated from those used only for educational purpose and manuals;

3) children's literature needs to respond to children's feelings and not to adults' [11].

Therefore, compliance with all of the mentioned above statements fulfill the informative function of the text. However, the last point requires additional comment as it may often seem difficult for authors and translators to transfer themselves into the dimension of the child's mind because of their age difference. The Bulgarian researcher of children's literature M. Slavova claims that "the adult [writer] actualizes the child inner self and aims at his/her creative realization through the child code, and the child becomes

a co-author, being the decisive figure to choose repertoire and text strategies, which in their turn ensure the child's potential of comprehension" [12]. Position of the child is traced through the role games, proposed by author, and the position of the author is realized through his own ideas about the child world perception, which forms the literary image. In other words, the writer is to go back in time and remember himself as a child, so that he would be understandable for his audience; he has to bear in mind that he is a kind of mediator between the child and the outer world, and thus, he is to bring new information to his audience. This assumption leads to the logical defining of main functions of children's book, among which are not only hedonistic and educative functions, but also didactic and communicative.

Professor R. P. Zorivchak outlines that "the translated children's literature fosters the reader's emotional feelings. It stimulates and activates the child's creativity, develops its original thought and critical thinking" [3]. Thus, the scholar stresses the importance to orient translation to project the communicative function of the translated text onto the target audience. Additionally, Zorivchak outlines the identity-shaping function of translations for children, since translations largely contribute to shaping child's personality. The professor provides examples that even in difficult times of 1918-1940 for the Ukrainian literary circles, the Ukrainian children still could get acquainted with the works of famous authors of children's literature.

Nevertheless, some writers and scholars totally abandon the notion of children's literature. The culture critic Gerald Early, Ph.D., the Merle Kling Professor of Modern Letters in Arts & Sciences at Washington University in St. Louis argues that "children's literature exists as an idea in the adult's mind about the ways one speaks to children, about how we adults configure childhood. It is a way for adults, in short, to distinguish children from adults" [10]. His statement pertains to those cases, when the book, which is widely considered to belong to children's literature, is read and enjoyed by numbers of adults. It leads to a conclusion that the boundaries of defining the children's literature are blurred, which makes researching of the field even more interesting and worth studying. Trying to define the scope of children's literature, scholars may find both its value for children and its role in adult's life.

The Swedish children's author Göte Klingberg outlines four main aims of translating for children:

- to further the international outlook, understanding the emotional experience of foreign environments and cultures;
- to make more literature available to children;
- to contribute to the development of the readers' set of values;
- to give readers a text they can understand [17, c.29].

If to combine these four aims, it can be stated that no matter whether the translator adheres to the ST, or whether he makes any alterations to it, his foremost aim is to enhance the international understanding of every child and approximate him to the foreign culture.

However, the translator often faces a number of problems in the process of rendering the message. He confronts the voice of an author from a foreign culture, which may be absolutely alien to the target reader. Therefore, in the process of translation, the translator is guided with the following norms: 1) norms related to the original text (faithfulness of the translation to its ST and author); 2) literary norms (the translation may lose its literary inner value when the translator tries to make the text more comprehensive to the target audience); 3) business norms (complying with the requirements of editors and publishing houses) [1, c.37].

However, the Ukrainian literary scholar Alina Zdrachko points out additional specific norms, which guide only the translator, who mainly deals with children's literature. These are the following: 4) didactic norms (the text is to teach and educate a child); 5) pedagogical (the text is to correspond to the level of language proficiency in the child); 6) technical (translation is to correspond to the original's layout) [1, c.37].

Obviously, the translator may apply numerous strategies of translating for adults to translating the system of children's literature. The translation techniques proposed by the French linguists Jean-Paul Vinay and Jean Darbelnet may be of use: direct translation, which includes borrowings, calques, and literal translation; and oblique (otherwise called 'free') translation, with presupposes syntactic transposition, modulation, equivalence and adaptation [9].

However, when the direct strategy of translation is not productive in terms of making the message comprehensive for the target audience, many translators of the children's literature turn to the technique of adaptation. A researcher of children's literature Zohar Shavit is a great advocator of the ST adaptation to the target audience. "Unlike contemporary translators of adult books, the translator of children's literature can permit himself great liberties regarding the text, as a result of the peripheral position of children's literature within the literary polysystem. That is, the translator is permitted to manipulate the text in various ways by changing, enlarging, or abridging it or by deleting or adding to it", – he states [14, c.112]. Nevertheless, usage of adaptation technique is to be justified with adhere to the norms, that the translator has to follow. "Changing and adjusting the text, the translator has to follow two main criteria: the norms of morality accepted and demanded by the children's system and the assumed level of the child's comprehension".

When it comes to dealing with foreign elements in the text, the notions of domestication and foreignization occur. Paloposki and Oittinen defined the two terms in the following way:

Foreignization generally refers to a strategy of translation whereby some significant trace of the "foreign" text is retained. Domestication, on the other hand, assimilates a text to target cultural and linguistic values [15, c.23].

In other words, the foreignization technique approximates the TT (text in the target) reader to the author's language, culture and the author himself; while with the help of domestication the translator adjusts the original text to the tastes and needs of the target audience. Anything can be domesticated or foreignized – proper names, measures, historical or cultural facts, and so on. The reasons for it may also vary – from children's overall comprehension to political issues. However, quite a few scholars advocated for the usage of foreignization, feeling that domestication denatures children's literature [15, c.81]. The Ukrainian scholar Ilko Korunets states that such an adaptation to the target audience's needs is possible only for folklore tales. "Author's stories are authentic works, and are to be translated following the original's style, its figurative meaning, so as to fully render the text", he states [2, c.74]. Moreover, the children's author Astrid Lindgren opposed even domestication of folklore tales, stating that "children have a marvellous ability to re-experience the most alien and distant things and circumstances, if a good translator is there to help them, and I believe that their imagination continues to build where the translator can go no further" [18].

On the other hand, some scholars claim that such a distinction of domestication and foreignization is absurd. For instance, the American scholar Michael Boyden undermined Venuti's strategies, including "the domesticating aspects of the foreignizing strategy,

and vice versa, the foreignizing potential of domesticating translations” into his analysis [13, c.24]. He meant that translators do not use either foreignization or domestication alone – they often include the elements of one into another within a single translation, which is often referred to as optimization. Additionally, Robin Douglas also stands for Boyden’s statement, claiming that “foreignization can have an impact opposite to that intended: if the intention of foreignization is to help target text readers better understand the source text culture, it can actually make the target text reader view the culture in question as ridiculous” [12].

Another issue, which arises whenever the translator encounters foreign to the target reader objects in the text, is the notion of loss. An element of the original text can be completely lost in the translation due to the absence of its correspondent either in the target language or in its culture. The translator may also sacrifice some properties of the text for the sake of preserving other features of it or making them even more vivid. For example, he may sacrifice some phonic and prosodic properties of the ST to make its literal meaning perfectly clear. Alternatively, he may sacrifice the meaning of some linguistic unit, but preserve its phonic expressions. Thus, the notions of ‘compromise’ and ‘compensation’ introduced by Hervey and Higgins cannot be ignored while dealing with losses in translation [11, c.44].

Compromise lies in deliberate actions taken by the translator while dealing with the text allowing omissions to take place in the TT. Meanwhile, compensation is a technique which involves making up for a loss of a ST effect by recreating a similar effect in the text in the target (TT). These two techniques are come to be of use to the translator when his/her working pair of languages have different roots and source and target culture have no common grounds. As a rule, in such cases untranslatability occurs either on linguistic or on the cultural level. However, compensation needs to be applied carefully. There always will be some degree of loss and the aim of a translator is to balance between what is to remain foreign to the target reader, and what can be adapted. Puns, alliteration, rhyme, slang, accents of characters – all these can be compensated, if the translator considers it to be worth it.

In addition, it is important to note that the original and its translation always stay in dialogical relationships. According to the dialogical concept of Ya. Bakhtin, finding the truth is possible only if there is an endless dialogue between the self and the Other; and this dialogue is realized on the edge of someone’s and another’s consciousness [6, c.693]. If Self is an author and the Other is Translator, it means that the translation contributes to the full implementation of the author’s identity in the target culture. Therefore, the final true meaning of the text is found.

Dialogism in translation is viewed as an approach with which the translation adequacy can be achieved on two levels: informational and cultural [5, 149]. It means that if the ST is not translated directly, but is rather domesticated or adapted, it does not mean that its translation is not faithful. Moreover, such an approach allows for deeper intercultural dialogue. The text is denoted in such a way that its meaning or form, or function, etc. is constructed again with notions and concepts close to the TT readers.

Challenges of translating for children are not only limited to word untranslatability. What makes children’s literature and its translation specific, are its features that differentiate it from the adult literature. The following list suggests the key issues that may pose a great obstacle while translating.

**Language.** Understandably, the task of a translator is to render all the words as closely to their meaning as it is possible. What poses a special challenge is translating dialects and slangs. The translator is to make certain assumption not only concerning the choice of the vocabulary for the TT, but also to find a strategy to differentiate different characters, in case the author differentiated them with the accent, or a specific way of speech. These are specifically restricted to dialogues, which are extremely important in creating vividness of the book, and thus cannot be lost. Moreover, the translator should be aware of the given regional dialect, or sociolect given in the context, so as to recognize it and find the proper strategy to render it. Although sometimes it seems like this kind of transformation is impossible because of its unrealistic effect. In this case, the English translator of children’s literature A. Bell points out that it is better to replace it with some colloquial idioms rather than applying a dialect [14,71].

**Names.** While translating, the names are usually left unchanged. However, sometimes it is not enough only to transcode it, since the name may bear information showing a certain feature of the character or referring to a certain event. Thus, the issue of speaking names arises. A speaking name is a name which fixes the key feature of the character and bears nominative and characterological functions [4, c. 283]. They evoke associations in a reader’s mind, referring to this key feature, and, thus, are preferable to be rendered by the translator. Speaking names can be simple (which can be understood even with a limited vocabulary) and complex (created by the author). The translator is to be responsible for deciphering the meaning of the speaking name, render all the stylistic and emotional components of it and make it comprehensible for a child reader.

**Humor.** It has always been a complicated matter, as even not always the same joke seems to be obvious to the ST readers. A translator has to render a joke and preserve the same humorous effect on the TT reader, which is difficult due to: 1) differences in structure of two languages to reproduce the same humorous effect; 2) different social and cultural background of TT readers [7]. The translator can either adapt the joke to the TT audience, or render it descriptively, or omit it at all. In other words, jokes are linguistically, socially and culturally determined, which presupposes the difficulties they pose during the translation process.

Among other aspects that pose an obstacle while translating for children are presence of illustrations and government’s censorship. The translator himself plays a major part in approximating the reader to the foreign culture, and is to be responsible for the choices made in the process of rendering messages.

To conclude, the children’s literature undoubtedly poses many challenges in the process of translations. Different scholars propose various strategies as concerning this issue, and disagree with each other on the proposed ones. Nevertheless, the strategies researched in this article remain the most widespread in translation for children, and if used wisely may bring knowledge and enjoyment to the target text reader

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